

# THE ICEBERG

A Special report on the 10th Legislative Assembly

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## HOUSING COMMITTEE TABLES REPORT



Photo Credit: Martha Flaherty

by Willy Peryouar

Consider the following situations:

"It is not that the house is no good but I have too many people living with me in my house right now and they desperately need houses. I have two married sons living with me..."

"The government staff can't get housing from the government so they have to rent from the housing association and we are lacking so many houses already. Could you keep that in mind that we are lacking houses because the government employees are using our houses?..."

"My wife can't walk because she's crippled. In the winter it is very cold because there is no porch on the house. There is just one guy who repaired my house, just the doors and the window, and then they put the roof on the house; that is all he did..."

These were just a fraction of complaints the Special Committee on Housing heard from the people when they held hearings across the north.

Early 1984 the 10th Legislative Assembly set up the Committee on Housing to travel across the north to

find out the housing concerns of the people. This committee visited 40 communities at the invitation of community councils and housing associations/authorities.

Arnold McCallum, co-chairman of this committee, said that in addition to public hearings, meetings with other agencies and individuals were held and the committee's work had received widespread public response and media attention. McCallum also said that the most important aspect of the committee's work was the time spent in the communities.

The special committee felt that its primary obligation was to give the people in the communities a chance to voice their concerns about the current housing situation. "After all," said McCallum, "it is the people who literally live with the problems day in and day out." This was why the committee spent two and one half months out of five months in the communities listening to the people.

During the 10th Assembly fall session the Special Committee on Housing presented its interim report to the Legislature with 11 recommendations. The major one was that the Assembly give the housing issue top priority.

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## Housing... can't from pg. 1

Although housing has long been recognized as an important issue it has never been given priority in terms of funding. The committee acknowledged the tremendous effort made by government to provide basic shelter to residents of the NWT but said that in 1984 people expect that their houses be more than simple basic shelters.

Another recommendation was to include capital funding for the construction of at least 200 public housing units in the 1985/86 Housing Corporation budget. But Gordon Wray, minister responsible for housing, said they already found money for 200 new houses in the upcoming fiscal year.

McCallum said he was pleased with this but added that it only addresses public housing and doesn't address home ownership or increases for housing associations or their employees. This had been one of the recommendations by the committee, to promote private home ownership in the North as much as possible.

During its travels the special committee had discovered that an increasing number of elderly live in houses in poor condition. There are still many elders living without the conveniences of running water, modern plumbing and central heating. Not only are these senior citizens physically unable to do basic repairs to their units, but they are also among the N.W.T.'s poorest residents.

Another of the committee's recommendations was that the southern rental scale be simplified because it is inappropriate for the North and unacceptable to the public. They want a method developed for determining affordable rent so that the rents charged reflect the economic and social realities for the North.

The committee also recommended that the Legislative Assembly extend the mandate of the Special Committee on Housing in order to allow it to research and analyze the major issues identified in the interim report, which the committee hopes will be responded to by the public.

The final report of the special committee on housing, to be presented in the spring session of the Assembly, will be a comprehensive analysis of northern housing issues.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

by Willy Peryouar

The recommendations made by the Special Committee on Housing are:

- **Priority:** The Assembly should give the housing issue top priority.
- **Capital funding:** That the 85/86 NWT Housing Corporation budget include capital funding for the construction of at least 200 public housing units.
- **Subsidies:** That the NWTHC stop its practice of providing housing subsidies to welfare recipients and GNWT employees living in NWTHC houses.
- **Senior Citizens:** That senior citizens living in NWTHC houses pay minimum rent.
  - Houses occupied by senior citizens be given top priority when repair and maintenance is required.
  - All Senior Citizen Repair Programs should be put into one agency.
- **Homeownership Programs:** The current Homeownership Assistance Program be available for prospective homeowners in all NWT communities.
- **Repair Programs:** The retrofit program continue and the re-hab program be phased out and replaced with a program that would improve conditions and keep the units available for sale to tenants.
- **Housing for the disabled:** That funding be made available to undertake a study of the housing needs of disabled NWT residents.
- **Private Sector Investment:** That private sector housing development be encouraged and supported through appropriate funding.
- **Rental Scale:** That the rental scale be simplified to suit the economic realities in the north.
- **Economic Development:** Since there is a long term requirement for construction of houses, that training programs be made to set up a construction industry in the north.
- **Extension of mandate:** That the Assembly extend the mandate of the Special Committee on Housing so that they can do more research and analyze the major issues identified in the Interim Report.

## ICEBERG REPORT

*This special report of the Northwest Territories 10th Legislative Assembly is produced by the staff of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada's Journalism Training Program.*

*From left to right: Ruby Arngna'naaq, Associate Director Caroline Freibauer, Director Bob Rupert, Deborah Evaluarjuk, William Peryouar, Nora Jarett, (sitting) Josh Teemotee, Jobie Weetaluktuk.*



# TRAINEES STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

by Bob Rupert

The reporters and photographers who produced this special publication on the Northwest Territories' tenth legislative assembly, are all students in the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada's first journalism training program.

Since last March, they have been studying in Ottawa. The program is funded by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission from its Yellowknife office.

The curriculum has been both practical and theoretical, from basic reporting, typing (Inuktitut and English), photography and radio broadcasting to a largely academic course in politics and government with special emphasis on the North.

Our field trip to Yellowknife gave the students an opportunity to test their understanding of the political process and their skills in research and writing. Each student had at least two assignments; a profile of one of the Eastern Arctic MLA's and one item from the agenda of the legislative assembly.

The students, like some of the less experienced politicians they interviewed and observed, are relatively new to the business of politics and political reporting. It is difficult for an experienced journalist to "cover" the democratic process in a clear and simple way. It is even more difficult for the beginner. But we know that our students, when they leave us at the end of next February, will not be allowed to be beginners. They will quickly be placed in positions of senior journalistic responsibility. That's why this program was initiated—to meet the high demand for trained Inuit

journalists. And that's why, so early in their training, we challenged them with such a difficult assignment.

This publication showcases some of the skills they have acquired over many months of hard work. This training program has been extremely demanding, with virtually all of the emphasis on journalism as opposed to communications technology. We have also insisted on a high standard of performance, and this insistence has led to some reduction in numbers. We do not apologize for this. Education and training without standards is demeaning to all persons involved. It is particularly unfair to the products of such training, who are encouraged to believe they have skills and become embittered when, out on the job, they find they have been misled. Our students came in with a wide variation in age, experience and education, and so they will leave us with varying skill levels. But each of them will have proven themselves to be willing and able to tackle the difficult business of reporting on native, and non-native, affairs.

We think coverage of the assembly was a worthwhile experience. The group enjoyed the hospitality and warm reception of everybody, by themselves. The rule against note-taking and photography inside the assembly was waived for us. Two records were set while we were in Yellowknife. One is in the books—for the lowest early November temperatures outside. The other isn't in the books—for the warmest reception any group of journalists ever got from politicians anywhere.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter.

## THIS WEEK IN PARLIAMENT

by Ruby Arngna'naaq

It seemed as if there was nothing new in our version of "This Week In Parliament" except that the different Northwest Territories politicians voicing the interests of their constituents instead of the "party line." The members of the N.W.T. Legislative Assembly bring new meaning to the term "representative government".

As time passed, it became apparent that there were unilingual Inuit members of the N.W.T. Assembly. Except for Tagak Curley, Nellie Courmoyea and Richard Nerysoo, who are executive members and have to answer for their Department's actions, the native members tended to let the topics go by without comment.

In certain topics for discussion, the line between the Inuit-based constituents and white-based constituents widened. When MacQuarrie along with Ft. Smith, Hay River and Yellowknife north and south members pushed for no citizenship requirements on the Eskimo Loan Fund policies the native based members outvoted their position. Another time, Ted Richard asked for consideration from the other members on Yellowknife's sewage system, which is suspected of being on the verge of collapse.

All in all, the N.W.T. legislative assembly members know the meaning of the word "democracy". Every member seemed dedicated to their voter, even if they knew it was sometimes going to bring laughter from the other members.



*Pope's chair*

# PUDLUK: MLA 'Real Inuk' HUNTER

by Deborah Evaluarjuk

"I decided to run as Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) because of my concern over my people, the Inuit. I felt the government didn't understand our lifestyle. I wanted them to understand. I knew the work would be hard but I made up my mind to sacrifice myself for the sake of my people," explains Ludy Pudluk.

Pudluk is serving his third term as MLA for the High Arctic, which includes the communities of Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay, and Arctic Bay. He was re-elected in 1979 and 1983. He was first elected in 1975, at a time when many more Inuit were being elected to the Legislative Assembly. "That's when the government seemed to realize how different our lifestyles are from each other," he says.

Pudluk was born in Pond Inlet, N.W.T. in 1943 and grew up as a "real Inuk" hunter. He worked for the territorial government as a settlement manager in Resolute Bay. One thing he didn't like about being a settlement manager was that the government tried to control the Inuit's lives, "telling them what to do."

Pudluk remembers when he first joined the Assembly. "Nobody taught me the rules or laws of the territorial government, I had to learn myself, that was the only way. It took about a year for me to learn the ways of the government and what an MLA is supposed to do."

"I thought I wasn't going to run again the second time, since the first three years were quite boring and slow, but the last year went on so fast and I realized I still had unfinished business. That's when I decided to run again. The same thing happened the second time."

He thinks he got elected because of his campaign talks concerning the wildlife and environment, how the territorial government had to have more concern over those subjects because of mining and drillings in the N.W.T. The Inuit didn't want their environment polluted or their animals driven away. Hunting is not a sport for the Inuit. They hunt for the survival of their families. He also said the Inuit knew him when he was growing up, and knew they could trust him.

He thinks another major reason he got elected was his concern about housing. "Most young couples have to stay with their parents for about five years while waiting for a house of their own, and most of the houses in settlements are over-crowded."

"The Inuit who already have housing are not satisfied they have to rent it. That's mainly what bothers them up to now. Most, if not all, are in poor condition. The Inuit brought up the subject many times before but they just seem to be ignored. That's why I started the Special Committee on Housing (Pudluk is the co-chairman). 'I've worked hard on it...it's not easy but I have a feeling we're finally going to be heard.'"

Pudluk says he has been able to help get Resolute Bay a community hall, school and reservoir which was badly needed. He was also able to get a fund for the road from Arctic Bay to Nanisivik.

"Personally I feel happy, and seem to have more confidence about the things I want to do because of the things I've brought forward and was able to make into reality. There were a lot of things I tried to have done and didn't finish. I promised my people, when I got elected again, and I tried my best to finish them."

During the years as an MLA, Pudluk was deputy chairman of the committee of the whole, and is still a member of the standing committee on finance. He is also on the Caucus Sub-Committee on Electoral Boundaries and the Special Committee on the Constitution of Canada.

Pudluk was a member of the special committee on division of the N.W.T. He is completely in favor of Nunavut, because he thinks more things can be done if the government is smaller. "In the territorial government we often can't decide whether the east or the west will get funding first for whatever they asked for. That's the problem in a large government. The East and the West are different from each other. We even have different caribou and wolves, the west has trees but the east doesn't."

Pudluk has some criticism for the government: "The things we want funding for must go through a slow process. Either they can't make up their minds, or, for example, we send our letters, it goes through the territorial government in Frobisher Bay and gets checked there, but then they have to send it to the Yellowknife government. Even if it's urgent it takes forever to get a reply. That's bureaucracy, and by the time the reply reaches us it's just about too late."

But Pudluk can enjoy the government and its meeting, "It can be fun too. When you learn something new about the government or when they seem to realize just how much we badly need something for our people."

Even though he is a three-times-elected member, he doesn't see himself as a leader.

"When I went home people started to say that I'm their leader. But I would answer them with: I am not your leader. You are my leaders. You gave me a job and I'm working for you. Now, they know I don't act like a boss towards them."

Ludy Pudluk sometimes misses his family when he's travelling. "But when you've been voted in and want to be an MLA you don't have much choice, you have to do it. It gets tiring to have to travel all the time."

Pudluk knows he won't stay in the Assembly forever. He says if there is somebody to replace him in the future he'd want somebody who is conscious of the north and it's people. Preferably a native who grew up in the north, who understands the Inuit. "I wouldn't want Inuit to be left out. That's what I want my people to think about before they elect another member for the government. 'I wouldn't want them to be disappointed in the end.'"





by Martha Flaherty

Not a great deal has changed within the Legislative Assembly since I last interpreted there in March of 1979. I found it very boring towards the end of the session, and found it hard to concentrate as the hours passed by.

It wasn't because of the subject they chose to deal with, it was the way they went about reaching agreement on the issues. I thought they wasted a lot of time.

The new location of the House in the Yellowknife Inn is much better. The facilities are better and it all seems much more organized than before. All the equipment is there—computers, typewriters, even in Inuktitut. There is office space for almost every department. Interpreters' facilities have definitely improved. They used to have only one booth full of smoke and with no air conditioner. And the partition walls could've been knocked out with one push. Now the interpreters have booths for all languages, Inuktitut, Slavey, Dogrib, and I believe, Chipewyan.

It is very confusing when you first watch the assembly. I was completely lost when I first worked there. It took me almost two years to get comfortable enough to understand what was going on, let alone how the assembly works.

The political jargon they use is very hard to understand. It's not so much their vocabulary as they way they talk.

The assembly itself, and the caucuses, are scheduled much better. The members used to spend more time trying to find out where the meeting would be, when it was scheduled and what they were going to talk about.

I also think having the media in a different section of the House is a very good idea—much more professional. In the past they had the media people all over the place. The public seemed confused. They couldn't tell the politicians from the media from the staff.

This tenth assembly was both interesting and boring. I thought the Expo '86 issue, the Royal Commission on Seals, and the language and battered-wives issues were interesting. Housing, I got sick of quickly and I did not pay much attention to other matters.



by Deborah Evaluarjuk

I find politics can sometimes be boring, and the Legislative Assembly had its unexciting moments, but I still paid attention to most things.

I just wish the eastern arctic MLA's could've done more about housing. I've seen so many young couples who still live with their parents for about five years while they wait to get their own home. So I think they should've gotten more funding for housing.

I also think the MLA's should always be notified if anyone is to be appointed to the public service to work on the native language issue. Richard Nerysoo never consulted the natives when he appointed Brian Lewis and the natives weren't too happy about this. Brian Lewis was said to be not too concerned with the native language issue.

From my point of view, the Legislative Assembly should think twice about the funding needs of the communities in the N.W.T. For example, Yellowknife was given funding to replace its curling rink and swimming pool at a time when Hall Beach doesn't even have a gym in the school. Frobisher Bay still doesn't have a community hall, and the one in Resolute Bay burned down so now the local people, who like to play games at Christmas, will have to freeze outside.

I especially resent the north not having as much as the south (Yellowknife). The young people get bored because there's no place to go to. It's worse without a community hall.

I was wondering, too, why, when they get funding for something, they don't get to work on it right away. An example of this is the college that's supposed to be built in the north. It's scheduled, I think, for '87. Why wait that long? Some students want to continue their education, but get discouraged because of a cultural difference when they go for college in the south. Some quit because they miss their families, or feel out of place with no close friends to talk to. Communicating is very important, especially when you're in cultural shock.

However, I was glad to hear that the minister for status of women, Dennis Patterson, is doing something about the task force on abuse of women. There are some native women on the task force, and there's going to be a new building for battered women in Frobisher Bay, which has one of the highest abuse rates in the N.W.T.

# ROYAL COMMISSION ON SEALS

by Josh Teemotee

Finally, after many years of silence, Inuit hunters will get a chance to tell their side of the seal-hunting story.

Nearly three years after the European countries much publicized decision to boycott baby seal pelts, the federal government is creating a Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry, and will hold hearings in the north.

It has been three years since the price of seal pelts plummeted, destroying the traditional and lucrative market.

Now that there is virtually no market, the commission will probably hear the same message from sealers, whether they are in Newfoundland or along the Arctic Coast. That message will be one of disgust that foreigners, who think they are doing the world a favour, have destroyed the Inuit's traditional subsistence based on the seal.

While the Northwest Territorial Government may not have jurisdiction over seals, many of its constituents still rely on seals as a food staple.

Commission chairman Albert H. Malouf has asked N.W.T. Renewable Resources Minister Nelly Cournoyea if the Territorial government will submit a brief.

When Cournoyea informed the Assembly of this invitation there was unanimous consent to send representatives. Territorial Minister of Economic Development, and Mines, Tagak Curley seconded the motion. He asked that the commission also come up to one eastern and western Arctic coastal community where the most seal-hunting is done.

Cournoyea, in turn, is asking Hunter's and Trapper's Associations to ask hunters to make their views known to the Territorial government. The Territorial government is also compiling information for its commission presentation.

Cournoyea hopes to take a poll of seal hunters in the Arctic, backed up with statistical figures, before the commission begins hearing in Montreal at the end of January.

Curley also said his department will submit a brief, concerning the marketing of seal products, instead of pelts. His department will look into the feasibility of setting up industries in the north to make secondary products from seal pelts.

However the situation concerning sealing regulations is still the same, even though Fisheries and Oceans are proposing a set of regulations geared mainly for the North. The department has been reviewing the proposal for the North. The new regulations would be known as the Northern Canada Seal Protection regulation.

At the present time the Department of Fisheries and Oceans recognizes the traditional right of the Inuit to hunt seals for subsistence, based on historical practice.

The department has said in the past that it defines subsistence as essential food and clothing, and trade is a secondary consideration though they give an incentive payment to seal hunters.

Studies by Territorial Fisheries and Wildlife researchers in 1976-77 reveal that the average Inuk hunter did not make much. For example, hunters in Arctic Bay make only an

average income of \$363 compared to the highest paid hunters on Holman Island, who average \$2,236.

The price of mature seal pelts reached a peak of \$23.65 in 1975-76. Then as the boycott began to hurt the harvest of baby seals on the East Coast, the price of the pelts showed a dramatic decrease. Inuit were forced to hunt even more seals in order to compensate for the lower price.

The trend, however, is that seal harvesting by the Inuit, both for food and subsistence, has gone down. In four years the number of seals taken for commercial use has gone from 42,000 to just over 7,000 while the price has gone from \$23 to \$14 (only for good quality pelts now).

The Territorial Government pays incentives through its Renewable Resource Department, as part of its fur incentives program. In order to qualify for the incentive, hunters have to make over \$600 and less than \$3,000. Then they get paid an additional ten per cent of the total value of their catch.

There is an added incentive program for seal hunters. The N.W.T. Renewable Resource department pays \$5.00 for each pelt sold. However trading companies will now buy only the best pelts, so sales volumes have gone down.

The federal Fisheries and Oceans department also pays incentives depending on the species of seal bringing the total payment up to about \$10 per pelt, on top of the average price per pelt of \$14. So seal hunters now get about \$24 a pelt.

Mature seals are mostly hunted in the north. The majority of all seal catches are for subsistence. Some of these pelts are used to make traditional seal skin boots, both for sale and personal use.

With the virtual disappearance of the dog team and kayak, Inuit hunters today rely on expensive gas-guzzling motorized freighter canoes and snowmobiles. While seal hunters are making less money these days, their costs are higher. Since the environment is very harsh, the Inuit also have to purchase expensive guns, ammunition and expensive clothing.

It is against this back-drop that the Territorial government will submit its brief, hoping the commission will have a major impact on the seal-skin industry. Cournoyea says the people who will sit on the commission have enormous credibility internationally. Cournoyea and Curly hope that a revitalized northern sealing industry will result from the Commission, but fear it may not happen without the bigger East Coast harvesting of baby seals.

The Commission will tour Pangnirtung and Holman Island between May 21 to 31st. Inuit will be able to testify before the commission. Pangnirtung and Holman Island take the most seals in the N.W.T. It will also go to Wakem Bay, in Northern Quebec. The Commission will hold hearings in Toronto, and its base-Montreal and Newfoundland. It will also tour overseas in London, England and Washington, D.C. in the United States. Anyone interested can write to Palais de Justice, Rm. 980 1 Notre Dame St. East, Montreal, Quebec. H2Y 1B6 or phone 514-283-4557.



*Inuk hunter, Charlie Pov, skinning seal on Harrison Island*

## MY VIEW OF THE LEGISLATURE

by Josh Teemotee

The Inuit are still embracing. They have embraced the white culture, and now they are embracing the Inuit culture. I was proud to hear Inuktitut spoken in the assembly, even if the white MLA's do not get the nuance of meaning. Words like integrity are hard to translate. The pride of finally getting a multilingual government for Inuit MLA's benefit was overwhelming.

I was also impressed with the solidarity of the Dene and the Inuit. It seems that the Dene MLA's demonstrated the co-operation between native people. Though I feel happy, I feel sad for the Dene. The region they inhabit has a non-native majority, despite the numerous Dene settlements.

I was happy to see native people are finally in a position to participate in decision making. The bureaucrats must no longer feel guilty about having no choice but to make choices for natives. Now natives are becoming bureaucrats.

I saw the spirit of the Legislative Assembly, like the northern lights, it is not stable. It has to move from community to community, because of ordinances. The distances between the communities is great. The MLA's carry a heavy responsibility, travelling from community to community.

Years ago I felt confident knowing that one day there would be a permanent home for the assembly. When Diefenbaker's government came into power this hope disappeared. His government proposed to divide the N.W.T. and set up permanent government centers in the late fifties.

Years ago, I saw, after a ten hour airplane flight from Frobisher Bay that this land is vast. It was in this forum, that Inuit must wrestle their tradition, their lack of experience in the paper world.

I felt sad that there would be jealousy between the west and the east. Jealousy, which was created by separate governments for the east and the west, sacrifices time.

Precious legislative time is wasted on disagreement.

Both sides are after the same thing but they are too busy fighting. Fighting caused by the east-west mentality. Every northern group has the right to ask for true representation. Instead, all they get from their elected representatives is a mud slinging contest between the east and the west.

The young peoples' future is in the hands of the government. The young people will take over the destiny of their children. When it is our turn, we won't have to go to southern legislatures to find what kind of government we will have.

I saw the MLA's drop their constituents minor problems in order to deal with major problems such as housing. I feel lucky that my family had to change houses only three times, even though the first move, we had to move from my father's own house. The present set up does not allow Inuit to have a feeling of permanence, but of wondering what kind of house they will be put in by the rental association. In Frobisher Bay, the men were discouraged from owning houses. Rather, they were encouraged to rent houses from the government. Today's tenants are suffering, having to put up with unstable rental associations. There is a tremendous need for houses.

I feel like an outsider in my hometown because when I apply for rental housing I have to wait. People from other communities come to Frobisher and pass those in the house waiting list. It is such injustice that raced through my mind when I was watching these MLA's attempt to come to consensus.

Even though I am happy for a consensus government, because it guarantees the rights of the native minority in the west and non-native minority population in the east, I fear the nightmare of partisan political process. The thought of democracy trickling down to nothing for minority populations is appalling. It was at this point I realized I am happy with the GNWT.

# PATTERSON: "The main thrust for party politics has come from the west..."

by Josh Teemotee

Dennis Patterson, 36, MLA for Iqaluit (Frobisher Bay) is determined to bring government to the east. "If it doesn't occur, I've decided that I'm going to retire from politics, if it doesn't come by the next assembly." Patterson feels honored to be a Qadlunat (white) elected in both 1979 and in 1983 by a predominately Inuit population.

The Minister of Education attended a one room school house. Patterson reminisces, "I grew up in a small logging camp, deep in the rain forest on Northern Vancouver Island."

"I never really thought of Inuit when I was little, the only native people I encountered were Indians," says Patterson, who adds he later became interested in Inuit "because of their independence and intrigue and ability to survive in harsh conditions."

From the urban maritime setting of Halifax where he studied and then practiced law, Patterson accepted a job in Frobisher Bay in 1977. He arrived with squash racket in hand, not knowing what to expect but yet anticipating a regular squash game after spending all day in court.

"I think I wore a wool poncho when I first arrived in Frobisher Bay," he recalls. He says he expected it would be warm enough—until the harsh arctic winds blew right through it.

Patterson received a BA from the University of Alberta in Edmonton and earned a law degree at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia.

Afterwards he was admitted to the Bar in Nova Scotia and British Columbia, practising in both provinces before accepting the Frobisher Bay job.

Patterson says, "I think I was as ignorant as most Canadians are," of the Northwest Territories (N.W.T.). He went to work for the Maaliiganik Tukiisiniavik Legal Aid Society as their sole lawyer. His jurisdiction was 13 communities, including Frobisher Bay's busy court.

His initial intentions were not uncommon "I was planning on just being a transient, I was going to work for a year and go back to my comfortable position in a Vancouver law firm," he recalls.

"I came up with the transient mentality, having a wonderful experience, exploring the adventure and romance of the Arctic and returning back south with lots of stories to tell."

"Somehow it didn't work that way...I've never looked back and I've never regretted it," Today its been nine years, enough for anyone to be considered a Northerner, Patterson contends.

"I'm a lawyer, I was a lawyer. I found the work more challenging than anything I've encountered since graduating from law school."

What was so challenging about it? "The law in the south was a means of protecting established interests, by and large, but in the North, working with native para-professionals and a board of directors, I think I was able to shake up the legal system a little bit."

Patterson introduced concepts to the courts about Inuit life "that may not have been fully considered before." Native people and some others complain that most laws fail to take

into account Inuit tradition and lack of exposure to southern laws.

"Lately of course, I've actually had a hand in helping to shape the making of laws, as a legislator," Patterson says.

But still "not much has been accomplished," concerning N.W.T. laws, which Patterson says are "largely carbon copies of laws you find in the south."

He still believes that in the N.W.T. one can shape laws to fit the "original inhabitants." But with so many different types of native people spanning roughly 12,000 square miles it seems difficult. When the N.W.T. divides politically into two territories, one in the west and another in the east, it should be easier to shape the laws for Inuit says Patterson.

The division of the N.W.T. would produce the eastern Nunavut (our land) territory, which Patterson hopes to be part of.

He now has a key role, as co-chairman of the Nunavut Constitutional Forum (NCF) set up in the summer of 1982. He is also Minister of Aboriginal Rights and Constitutional Development. It was through this department that NCF and its counterpart, the Western Constitutional Forum were created. The two together are known as the Constitutional Alliance, both working towards the division of the N.W.T.

The quest for division was cornerstoned by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) and, oddly enough, supported mainly by the Eastern Arctic MLA's, who couldn't agree on unity with their western colleagues in the 9th Assembly.

A plebiscite on April 22nd, 1982 demonstrated that the eastern MLA's represented their constituents' views. The east overwhelmingly favoured division, if it had been an election, it would have been a landslide.

Patterson feels that there is already enough division in the assembly because of the differing regions and attitudes towards government, so he thinks party politics shouldn't ever surface in the assembly. There are no official parties within the assembly. Everything is agreed to by consensus instead of the opposing numbers of party politics. Patterson says he is non-partisan.

Ultra-right Conservative as a youth, influenced by his father, Patterson was involved in B.C. student politics. As his education progressed so did his Tory allegiance. "I attended the convention in 1967 in which Stanfield was elected to replace John Diefenbaker."

In 1968-69, while studying in Edmonton, he worked for a small Alberta opposition party—Conservatives. It was "led by a fellow named Peter Loughheed." He still knows some of the original workers in the Loughheed government that overthrew the long-standing Social Credit party, beginning a Tory dynasty in Alberta.

Shortly afterwards he became disillusioned with party politics. When he came north, he supported the New Democratic Party in 1979 when it brought the first Inuk, MP, Peter Ittinuar into parliament.

Patterson's support went along with their philosophies, mainly because they were the only party looking at the north, not so much today.

Today he will remain non-partisan, "at least till

division occurs," He considers himself to be a "friend of all."

Consensus government is working well says Patterson, a fine example is being set for the rest of Canada. "Although it has a few weaknesses, I think it has some great many strengths," Patterson believes it is "in keeping within the character of the people of the Northwest Territories."

It helps to find solutions through discussion says Patterson. He says "partisan politics promote confrontation and polarization that is strange to the thinking of many of the long time residents."

Patterson's constituents "work things out consensually on all levels," largely due to convention based on population size.

"The main thrust for party politics has come from the west, they're welcome to it when they have division," Patterson says.

When the Premiers excluded Aboriginal Rights in the Constitution in 1981, the N.W.T. government showed consensus at its best, says Patterson. Yukon the sister territory with a Party system was "fighting whether or not they were going to take a motion," on the deletion of rights says Patterson. Whereas the entire N.W.T. Legislative Assembly demonstrated a "sit in" at the House of Commons says Patterson.

On the N.W.T. government, "some people say its not accountable to the public," says Patterson.

However there are "rules and tradition that has been built in" he says. In the N.W.T. an assembly member can "take out" ministers if they show lack of confidence in their portfolios.

"I think we're the most politically sophisticated people in the country" says Patterson of northerners' government.

He also points to the input the eastern arctic has had towards adapting existing government services to "their needs."

The eastern arctic has "political leaders quite capable of directing professionals that we may have to bring in from the south," if a Nunavut government is ever formed says Patterson.

A new Nunavut government would not be any different than the one in Yellowknife, except decisions would no longer be made there, they would be made in the east Patterson has said throughout the year.

The NCF had contemplated province-hood, but set their sites on a territorial legislative assembly for Nunavut. Trudeau once said that the N.W.T. wouldn't get provincial status, at least not in his lifetime.

"Division may come faster than we think, if the new Conservative government looks favourably on the situation of the Yukon." Patterson thinks that if the east got their own territorial government that they could then consider province-hood.

"I'd be quite happy to assume territorial status for the short term in a new territory," says Patterson. He doesn't think that it's "a bad position to be in." As a new territory Nunavut could quite successfully "negotiate resource revenue sharing," but offshore resources are held by the federal government Patterson says.

"Look at it eh? Education, local government, health and social services, economic development, renewable

resources, all the land animals anyway, these are areas of pretty crucial concern to our citizens, we'd like to go much further," Patterson says of some of the jurisdictions of the Territorial government.

Patterson says "it's a bit more difficult to gain consensus in our government, we have to work at it as a government, bringing in initiatives to the Legislative Assembly." The actions of the assembly have to appeal to most of the MLA's says Patterson.

"I think we are breaking new ground with our consensus government... it's worked very well in some very difficult situations."

It's been effective because whenever the assembly got together they have been united on any major issues says Patterson.

They've instilled in the assembly a new rule to make them more accountable, after two years ministers have to resign and run again for their position.

Province-hood "could be an enormous hurdle for us, we would have to make significant concessions to the other provinces," Patterson says cautiously.

"Maybe we should go for territorial status and make the best of that and go from there," Patterson says. "The rules have changed with the new constitution, it's not just a matter of getting agreement from the federal government any longer to become a province."

His three portfolios, education, status of women and aboriginal rights and constitutional development place a great deal of demand on him. With six months in the air, he's had to take a residence in Yellowknife and Frobisher Bay. "It's more than a full time job, I'm not complaining I asked for it."

All the ministers get paid the same, regardless of the number of portfolios, and with his common law wife, Marie Uviluq and three children and two houses his salary doesn't go far. He could be making more working as a lawyer down south, but not in Frobisher Bay's legal aid society.

He feels like a northerner when he's south, but up north "feels humble when he is among northerners." Of his job he says the "worst part is having to fly across two time zones and most of Canada, far away from home." Patterson favours an eastern capitol.

"People in Frobisher Bay wonder how come you're not around enough, people in Yellowknife say 'how come you're not here all the time', you begin to conclude that you are spending all your time in an airplane," Patterson says. "I'm only putting up with it, for Nunavut."



# N.W.T. COMMISSIONER NO BUREAUCRAT

by Ruby Arngna'naaq

The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories (NWT) is no heavy-duty federal bureaucrat. He is shy, gentle John Parker, third generation immigrant son of Bruce and Rose Parker, born February 2, 1929.

The son, is third generation Canadian in that his father and grandfather were born in Canada. But his mother was a British immigrant who moved to Pincher Creek, Alberta in 1911. She was a store clerk in Pincher Creek when she met Bruce Parker.

John Parker, remembers his Yorkshire-born mother joking about her maiden name. "Before I was married I was a Husband..." Now she is Rose Parker. Her parents followed her into Canada and they too became Canadians.

John's first childhood memory was of his father hammering at what became their home for several years. Friends and neighbours and the Parkers, later built another house a few yards away from their first house.

Luckily for his elder brother and for John, his father did not believe farmers had to get up at 5 a.m. to do their chores. Instead they would make sure their daily tasks were finished by school time.

The two brothers rode bicycles, horses or they'd be driven by horse and buggy. When cars became affordable, a car pool was organized.

There was one time John became worried that his brother would not stop sleeping. John, his brother and some friends were riding the horses, when his brother fell off his horse. John remembers that his brother was unconscious for some time. Although his brother recovered, John remembers being very concerned that his brother would not be alright.

John went from kindergarten to grade eight in a one-room country school, three miles outside of Didsbury, in southern Alberta. Then onto junior and high school in Didsbury.

Because he excelled in mathematics and sciences, Parker took engineering geology in the Alberta university in Edmonton. "It seemed the thing to do was to take engineering if you were male and interested in math and science." Being a farmer's child, he naturally took to the "great outdoors" so he chose engineering that led him outdoors into mining and geology work.

During the summer breaks, he would end up working for the surrounding farmers. But in 1949, Parker first went up north, when he took a job with Eldorado Mining Company in Beaver Creek, near what is now Uranium City in northern Saskatchewan.

When he graduated in 1951, he went back to work for Eldorado for a season. Then in the fall he was accepted by Norman Byrne, "Irish B-y-r-n-e" whose contracting company base was in Yellowknife, NWT. Three years later the exploration work around Beaver Creek dwindled, so the owner moved Parker to Yellowknife (YK).

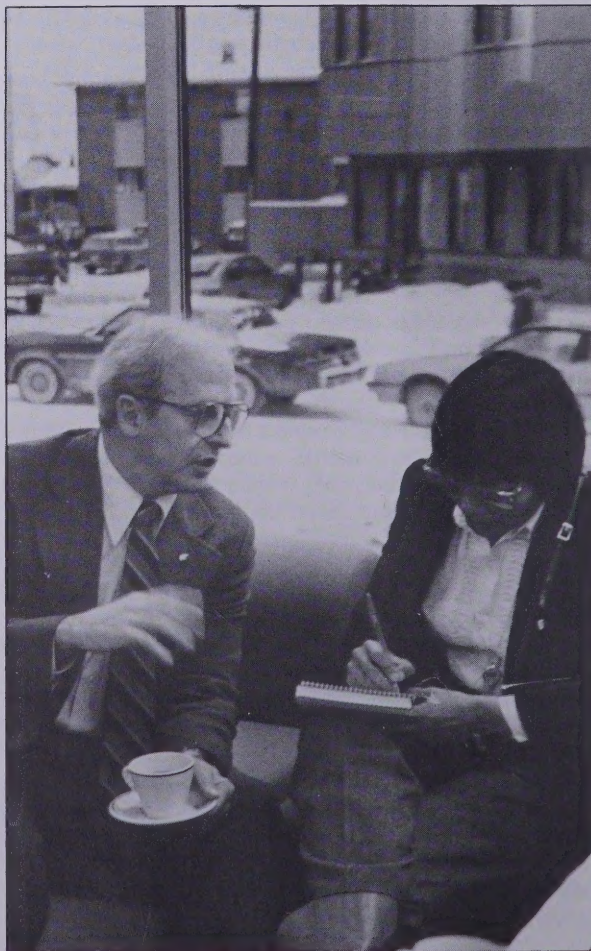
Parker did not feel isolated in YK because he knew and had worked with a lot of the same people. Many of those people had commuted weekly between YK and Beaver Creek. When the work turned North, many of these same men stayed to work while those from Northern Saskatchewan commuted from their homes.

When asked which characters he remembered most, Parker said: "It's hard to single any one particular character out from the other." One person, Parker remembers working with was Lanky Muiers, who contracted work in the rocks and shaft sinking. He was "...so strong and so active in the mining industry."

During his last university year, Parker met Helen Panabaker through a mutual friend, who was studying social work at the same university. He saw her again on one of his business trips to Calgary from YK. They married in 1955 and she moved with him to YK. A year later, they had a daughter, Sharon.

Sharon was a happy child and generally full of life. As she grew older, she carried her energies into sports like, volleyball, figure skating and badminton. She even won a gold medal in badminton at the Arctic Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska.

In 1960, the Parkers had their second child, Gordon. He enjoys the outdoors as much as his father does. Gordon's second enjoyment is the arts, from designs to music, although "...he's always been very much a businessman, while (he



Ruby Arngna'naaq interviews John Parker

is) also very interested in the arts.” He spent a year studying industrial design. He majored in political science. Today Gordon Parker works in a company that develops commercial properties and lives with his wife in Edmonton, Alberta.

The Parkers often camped and canoed near YK as a family, taking advantage of the virgin lakes and rivers. Soon after entering the workforce, Parker bought a boat, then he says; “...I bought a car to get to the boat.”

They spend as much time as possible out in the cabin they built from the surrounding trees. The cabin is about 20 miles north of YK, on Prosperous Lake.

Parker himself has another pastime—gardening. He grows as many different kinds of vegetables as he can in their backyard. He says: “...it sort of came naturally, having grown up on a farm.”

Parker’s first introduction into politics was as a town councillor in YK. He enjoyed the change in lifestyles, so within a few years Parker ran for mayor, when the YK mayor resigned. He won the election and in one year he ran again and got in by acclamation.

It was while he was mayor, he was asked to get involved in Territorial politics. “Some politicians and bureaucrats down there (Ottawa) wanted to divide the NWT into east and west.” Parker accepted the appointment and became one of three panel members in the Carrother’s Commission, in 1965.

They travelled all over the North and found that the western Arctic was far more developed economically and politically. The commission recommended that the North stay together until the eastern Arctic caught up with its western counterpart.

Back then, Indian and Northern Resources was fully in control of the Northwest Territories. There was an NWT council but they were all appointed and the executive decisions came out of Indian and Northern Resources.

While the rest of Canada celebrated its centennial (100th birthday) the NWT was busy taking its government back into its own backyard. Indian and Northern Resources (DIAND) moved its Northern administration and political office to the North by creating a separate government. The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) was established for the first time, in the NWT at YK with 40 employees. Stewart Hodgson who was appointed by Arthur Laing, Minister of DIAND, appointed Parker as his Deputy. The Council of NWT had appointed councillors and seven elected members.

In two years, the executive was given provincial-like powers to administer and develop the NWT residents, under the direction of the Commissioner and his deputy along with the appointed executive committee. In 1970, the GNWT took over the administration of Keewatin and Eastern Arctic, determined its expenses under certain conditions and it was given power to appoint magistrates and justices of the peace.

Nine years later, when Parker was appointed Commissioner, GNWT and its legislative assembly (LA), the North had seen a Berger inquiry into pipelines in the Arctic, the Drury Report on political development, a number of elected members of LA appointed to the executive council, and several amendments to the NWT Act each time increasing the number of elected members into the LA.

Throughout all the above changes, Parker was in on what he considered “a real challenge”. He was right in on many of the decisions during what one might call “nation building”. Insofar as the Inuit population is concerned, Parker had seen the night and then the daylight, (whichever way you look at it). The Inuit children who were just entering school when Parker came to the GNWT, are now some of the Inuit politicians, managers, and nation builders.

As Commissioner Parker was now able and more than willing to hand over more powers to the MLAs. The MLAs voted his position out of the LA’s formal session, but he could attend the Committee of the Whole where the assembly does most of their “hashing out session”. Although he still had to finalize the bills and resolutions passed by the MLAs.

“These were and are exciting and challenging times” the Commissioner says. In the short five years that he has been Commissioner, he saw the council take on more political initiatives to further its independence. In 1981 the members of the LA went to Ottawa to protest the removal of the aboriginal rights clause from the charter of the Canadian Constitution. The peoples also had some international events where they were directly involved; a Soviet Satellite fell and scattered between Baker Lake and Snowdrift, and Green Peace ruined many of their constituents economic status.

In 1983, the LA created yet another committee, the Western constitutional Forum and its counterpart, the Eastern constitutional forum and look into ways of equally dividing the North’s political entity.

Throughout all this development, Parker met many people. Including a self made millionaire from Vancouver, Abe Oookpik, one of the first Inuk MLAs to be elected into the LA, Duncan Pride who boasts of “little Prides all over the North” in his book, Lloyd Barber a well-admired constitutional and native rights expert and Tagak Curley, founder of more native institutions among the NWT Inuit.

Parker believes that his job as Commissioner is to dissolve the position and turn it more and more into the role of lieutenant-governor of a province. Let the North “...develop to its natural path.” He strongly believes that bureaucrats should stay out of the way of the politicians, allowing the politicians to state the policies and to set them.

When asked, Parker refused to answer or even speculate on the question of division. Because he stays clear of any political opinion in public.

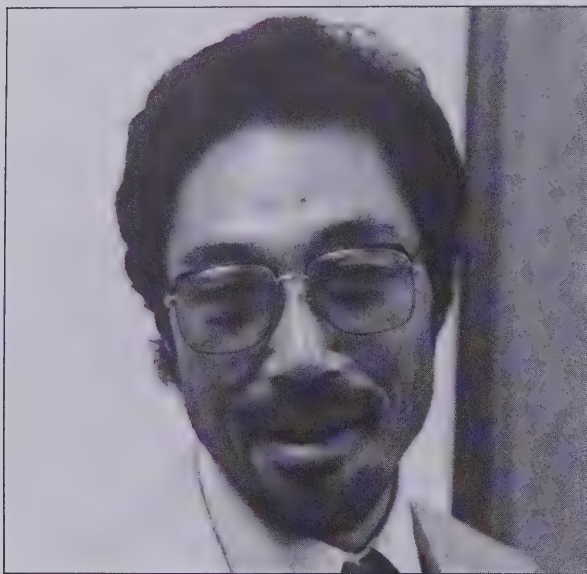
What he did say with some humour was that the native-based and non-native based electorate have some heated discussions when the MLAs meet in Committee of the Whole.

He says, with pride, that the executive council now consists of fully-elected members except for himself. There would have to be an amendment to the NWT Act before his position can be dissolved from the executive. The federal government would have to amend the NWT Act.

Although Parker enjoys his job and hobbies, it is easy to see that his heart belongs to a year old granddaughter. We were not long in an interview, when this reporter was shown some pictures of his granddaughter, with words like: “...she’s very cute little girl” and “...yes, she has beautiful blue eyes.” The pictures had been taken last summer in the Parker’s house.

# APPAQAQ: TOO MUCH TIME SPENT TRAVELLING

by Martha Flaherty



*Moses Appaqaq*

Moses Appaqaq knows he was born in Sanikiluaq, the only settlement in the Belcher Islands. But he's not sure when! "I think I was born in around 1946 in Igluvigaq," he laughs.

Appaqaq who got married in 1971, has six children, four of his own and two adopted from his uncle who was very sick.

Appaqaq is a grandson of Robert Flaherty, a film maker who made the famous documentary *Nanuq of the North*.

"Everyone talks about Flaherty, because he was the only white person that was around. His Inuktitut name was Saumialuk (the big left handed man so maybe he was a lefty)," says Appaqaq. Robert Flaherty travelled extensively in the north, making films and taking photographs.

Appaqaq attended school in Chesterfield Inlet for a month and a half, but he had to go to hospital and never resumed his studies. He regrets he did not have a chance to continue his education. If there was an adult education centre in Sanikiluaq, he says he would attend. "If I knew the English language I would be a politician 'like a qallunaq', without having to have an interpreter," he sighs.

Appaqaq owned a dog team for a short period of time, but he had to get rid of them because they ate a child. "Sometimes I wish I had them," he said.

Appaqaq says the old, traditional ways were usually good, but not always. Hunters and Trappers in their meetings talk about returning to dog teams because of the high cost of gasoline and hunting equipment. Inuit in Sanikiluaq still own huskies, but they do not use them for hunting. And Appaqaq remembers one team that killed and ate a child.

He remembers that life was often hard in Igluvigaq, with snow houses and nothing to trade with to buy goods. "I remember at the age of 12 my brother and I used to hunt. Sometimes we would travel all night just to make \$6 by

selling seal skins. Just for one seal skin we would travel all night, he explained. But there would be money left over after they bought what they needed.

Appaqaq was first elected in 1979 and re-elected in November, 1983.

In the Ninth Assembly he was a member of the Special Committee on the Constitution of Canada, the Special committee on the Division of the NWT, and the Standing Committee on Legislation. He is still a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Appaqaq was a co-op buyer for eight years. He resigned because he thought he wouldn't be able to give the job enough attention after he was elected MLA. "I knew I would be gone for a long time when I travel for meetings" he said.

He has been with settlement councils since 1971. He is also involved with church groups and he is currently the assistant to the Mayor of Sanikiluaq.

In the second election in his riding there were six nominees.

"I ran for election, but I did not give all that effort to it because it was up to the public to decide who they want to elect.

"Plus, I knew I didn't work hard enough for them during my first term as MLA. It wasn't because I didn't want to, it was that I wasn't sure of the procedures of MLA," he said.

Appaqaq was pleased to win a second term because he is now more comfortable as an MLA and understands his responsibilities better.

"It's not that I don't have the confidence with my work. It's travelling through the South that bothers me," he remarks. Travelling through the south on his own scares Appaqaq because he does not speak English fluently.

"Once I was completely lost, it's very frightening," he remembers. He finds travelling inconvenient sometimes and it requires him to be away from his children.

Appaqaq knows a little bit about legislative procedures, but has not mastered all of it yet. The regulations of the Committee of the Whole are very different from our Hamlet Council procedures. "When you first become MLA, you may be excused with your mistakes, therefore you shouldn't feel bad about it. I'm more at home now. When I have to speak up I don't sweat anymore. I can challenge the other members now if I want to," he chuckles proudly.

Appaqaq wasn't fully understood because of his dialect when he first came to the assembly.

"As long as I twist my dialect a bit we have no problem communicating with each other," he says. He says they had to look for a northern Quebec interpreter for quite sometime before they found Mary Nashook.

Appaqaq says there was an indecision a few years ago when government representation was raised, whether Sanikiluaq should be represented in the N.W.T. government or the Quebec legislature.

"Two people represented Sanikiluaq at the Frobisher Bay meeting. Those two chose N.W.T government to

represent us. Maybe because it's a word Nunatsiaq (a good land) that attracted them," he wonders. Now he says the people think it was a rather good choice.

One thing the N.W.T. government did was to fly in 60 reindeer—10 male and 50 female—from Tuktoyaktuk to Sanikiluaq. The reindeer multiplied in population to 700. The community quota was 30 last year. "The reindeer meat is excellent meat," he declared.

Appaqaq remembers being terrified by an epidemic when he was around 6 or 8 years old. "I remember very well when Inuit were almost wiped out by influenza," he said. He uses his hands to demonstrate how frozen bodies were lined up in a row. Appaqaq was not ill, but he was afraid he might die from starvation.

"The only way we would have survived was by hunting and by visiting each camp to check for food. We would walk into their Igluvigaq and Inuit would all be in bed sick, no food, and no sign of light," he recalls sadly.

"The people would die from starvation even if they weren't sick. The dogs were also dying of starvation, he continues. "Dogs would drop dead right in the middle of travelling."

Finally, the plane came to drop medication and food. He thinks it was because of the contagious disease that the plane did not land.

"I did not know where the plane was coming from, most likely government people," he thinks. Appaqaq remembers the Inuit getting healthier afterwards. But half of the population died that year. Some of the outpost camps were almost wiped out completely with only two or three survivors.

It was after that epidemic that the government decided to move Inuit from north and south camps to what is now Sanikiluaq, probably because there was more wildlife in that area.

"Sanikiluaq" was named after a legendary hunter who was so good he would catch a fox just by running. He was unusually fast and used to support himself by selling the skins.

"He bought all kinds of goods from the store: tea, flour, tobacco and other things," says Appaqaq. "He would buy goods enough for all the camps in Belcher Islands. He died of old age.

"I remember Sanikiluaq. I'm married to his granddaughter," he said proudly. Sanikiluaq has many grandchildren in Sanikiluaq.

Most of the community's priorities have been met, so they are not asking for anything in particular at the moment. They now have a warehouse and a school is being built and will probably be completed in two years.

The Sanikiluaq population is about 400. Unemployment is high. About 20 people work for government, the rest live by carving. Sale of the skins has decreased. The unemployed are assisted by social services.

Sanikiluaq residents were very concerned about education, particularly lack of cultural education materials. "I worked very hard on this, which is now useful to the community," he states.

Appaqaq said the Inuit like to talk about the "good old days", but wouldn't go back to them completely. Some people would like to escape from today's drug and alcohol problems but they enjoy the advantages of new technology and life is a lot more convenient than in the past.

"Myself, I'm in favour of joining both ways of living—old life style and this generation," says Appaqaq.

## SPOUSAL ASSAULT

by Ruby Arngna'naaq

Like sexual abuse of children, spousal assault is not a new practice. But according to women's associations everywhere in Canada, the abuse of women is on the increase. It is found "even among the best of homes." Because of the small population of the natives of the Northwest Territories (NWT), the abuse is especially visible to everybody. But the victims will seldom admit they are abused, even to those closest to them.

Dennis Patterson, minister responsible for the Status of Women in the NWT was prompted by the Status of Women's Committee to launch a task force to look into the problem of spousal assault, "better known as wife battering."

The Task Force on Spousal Assault consists of Iris McCracken, Geela Giroux, Margaret Vandell, Lena Kikoak and recently appointed Bertha Allen and Mary Jane Goulet. Lawyer John Bayly is the chairman.

The members of the task force have split into eastern and western segments to travel across the NWT covering as many communities as they possibly can within their time limit. They have advertised their inquiry through all available media; radio, T.V. and newspapers, and have drawn up a pamphlet which has been sent into the communities. They have already held community meetings and phone-in-shows, with private phone calls for those wishing to stay anonymous.

Patterson made an interim report to the 10th Assembly of the NWT on the activities and expected travel time of the task force members. The Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's) seemed to be content with what the task force is doing.

Not all the members believe wife battering is on the increase. One member said it is "one of those reporters' issues." Red Pederson (MLA-Kitikmeot West) said in an interview: "I never, never heard of beating...(there is) higher onset of sexual assault of the younger generation." But Patterson, the MLA for Frobisher Bay said those who think that wife battering is a reporters' issue have not consulted with their female voters.

In a prepared text to the Baffin Regional Council (BRC), the task force described the battering of women as a serious problem,... "which causes much unhappiness, which can cause serious injury and sometimes death." The task force said it would be contacting victims, their families and their friends. The officials to be interviewed by the task force include social workers, health care workers, teachers, legal service act and lawyers, judges and federal government employees, nurses and doctors. The task force also expects to hear from other concerned citizens, committees and associations.

Patterson expects the task force to come up with a report by early next year, 1985. "Ideas are being expressed regarding approaches and possible solutions which are as varied as the northern communities themselves, he said.

# SLAVE RIVER HYDRO PROJECT

by Nora Jarrett

It was perhaps just a case of history repeating itself when the proposed Slave River Hydro Project was again put on the back burner at the 10th legislative assembly in Yellowknife.

The MLA's were to discuss a report on the hydro project, which has been "in the works" for decades. But other more pressing issues, like housing, took precedence and once again the project discussion was put on hold.

Some years ago, Ernie Kyte moved to Wood Buffalo National Park, along with several others to observe the Whooping Cranes. Jacques Von Pelt is one of several people who moved up there to observe the cranes, the only ones of that type in the North. These men moved up there because of their interest in the birds. And so the natural resources, as well as the beauty of the area, are threatened by the proposed Slave River Hydro Project. But while the construction and necessary flooding upstream could threaten the ecology, it would also stimulate the N.W.T. economy.

The biggest plus would probably be the employment opportunities. These must be balanced against concern about the effects of changing the water levels, both upstream and downstream. The transmission line route is itself a problem. The surveyed lines are thought to be technically feasible but there is concern that they may alter the migration route of the birds, sharply reducing the bird population in the Athabaska Delta.

Crossing Lake Athabaska with the line would cost more than the other possible routes. The trappers of that area might be affected, raising the question of compensation.

The Slave community also has concerns about roads being built in their area to service the dam. While the road would probably mean more money, not only in jobs but also in tourism, this might affect hunting and fishing. To gain one thing, it is necessary to sacrifice another. No matter where the road is built it will definitely open up the area to surrounding communities accessible by road.

A 1982 feasibility study indicated it would be possible for the hydro project to be totally financed by the private sector. It has also been suggested that the government should take on the project itself since it would be more sensitive to local communities in its hiring and purchasing policies. The people of the Slave communities want a voice in development of the project.

Although a lot of preliminary research has been done, the Slave River Hydro Project is still only a concept. Public information hearings have been limited because the future of the project is unclear. Federal officials in Ottawa continue to do research, and there is some indication that the project may someday go ahead.

With the unemployment rate so high in the N.W.T. job opportunities might make the involved areas quite prosperous, thus local business are the prospective supporters of the dam construction. For this reason, and also because it would eventually promote tourism and other business opportunities.

The benefits seem to outweigh the problems, considering from a purely financial point of view, people fear the countless social problems which will always accompany any construction boom. One predictable problem is a high level of pregnancy for the young native women. The birth rate is already high among native mothers who cannot afford to keep their children. And there is often an influx of communicable social diseases around construction camps.

And although it was once thought that the power from the Slave River project would be cheaper, and in great demand in Alberta and some American states, now there is some doubt. One research report indicated there are no available markets in either country and that the power would be costlier than it is now from other sources.

As time goes by, the prospects of the Slave River Power Project seems dimmer and dimmer. The whole idea may eventually die on paper—of old age.



Photo credit: Martha Flaherty

*MLA's TAKE TIME TO RELAX. From left to right: Bob McQuarrie, Nick Sibbeston, Moses Appaqaq, Tagak Curley, Ludy Pudluk and Pauloosie Paniloo, Elijah Erkloo*

# COMMENTARIES



by Willy Peryouar

My first impression of the 10th Legislative Assembly was that things sure have improved since I attended a session as a student seven or eight years ago.

All the facilities are now all under one roof. Before they were all over the place.

The Assembly building is attached to the Yellowknife Inn, which makes it a lot easier for gimps like me to get around. I broke my leg a while ago and am lugging a heavy cast around using crutches.

Presumably most of the MLA's stay at the Yellowknife Inn, before they stayed in various places around town, which only added to the confusion.

But the proceedings are still pretty much the same as they were before, with many of the same people raising hell and yelling at each other.

The media and interpreters now have their own separate glassed-in booths and don't stick out like sore thumbs anymore. There used to be makeshift booths and observers would most likely wonder what that big box was stuck off to one side (maybe a toilet).

One thing the public might well question is the need for the MLA's private lounge and board room. "If you want privacy, why not kick everyone out of the chambers?", one might ask.

Another change I never expected is that the Commissioner no longer sits in with the assembly. He's just an observer now. So why is he there?

The proceedings of the assembly haven't changed much. After recently watching the federal Parliament in progress, and then seeing the Assembly in action I asked myself, "Haven't I seen this somewhere before?"

During the week we were there I kept noticing this one MLA coming in a bit under the weather a lot of the time; I mentioned it to another MLA at a reception. Explained the MLA; "It's not surprising to see a new MLA's going heavy...because of the new pressures put on them and responsibilities they aren't used to. Look at me," he went on to say, "when I first got here, I did the same thing. But you get used to it after a while, now I just drink soft drinks."

During the week, I saw that the new members seem to feel a little out of place. They usually don't have much to say unless they have something that really concerns their constituents.

Other than the improvements of facilities and services, which have helped a great deal, there hasn't been too much change.

New DIAND Minister David Crombie sounds as if he may be getting ready to give the NWT Government more power to handle its own affairs. I just wonder if the Legislative Assembly is ready for it.

by Nora Jarrett

I guess my perception of the Legislative Assembly of the N.W.T. was pretty much out of context. I didn't expect to see things performed so formally. I was surprised to see the N.W.T. is run in the same manner as Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Considering the remoteness of the areas being represented, I think they handle things the way they should, by people chosen by the people. I found myself thinking how the N.W.T. people and their government are more fortunate and prosperous than in Labrador. They are represented by a group of people who are familiar with the problems. The problem-solving is close to the source of the problem.

But I did find the mace and some of the formalities a bit archaic. The in-fighting and disputing among the MLA's was typical of Canadian government. But I was impressed at how they set priorities for areas—not the N.W.T. as a whole. I learned that politics is pretty much the same no matter where you go. I think, however, that translating can at times, depending on the topic, put things out of context very easily. The translators must to be very fluent in English as well as Inuktitut. What a demanding job.

I think that self government, even in the degree they have it in the N.W.T., is a healthy thing for the Territories. I wish Labrador could have self representation by people aware of the problems. In comparison to the provincial government of Labrador (Newfoundland), the N.W.T. is much better off. They are more closer to equality with the rest of the country than Labrador, considering the resources the two have. I found the people in remote areas of the N.W.T. have a say in what is going on and are made aware of current affairs, very much unlike what the Labrador Inuit receive from their government. The people in the N.W.T. seem more prosperous and fortunate in that they are always treated fairly by receiving as well as giving of their resources.



# SCENES FROM YELLOWKNIFE





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